

Approved as Amended 2/18/15
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes
Meeting Date January 14, 2015

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Isaacson Shelley Dunbar Frances Hartogh Molly Davis Kevin Bracy Knight

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Tracy Winfree Jim Reeder Mark Gershman Cecil Fenio Heather Swanson
Phil Yates Steve Armstead Kelly Wasserbach Greg Seabloom Leah Case

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Approval of the Minutes

Tom Isaacson said under public comment on Agenda Item 5, “Dennis Kvehl” should be “Dennis Kuehl,” “Bill Skebli” should be “Bill Scebbi,” and “Timothy Green” should be “Timothy Breen.”

Shelley said on page 6, under Return to the Board, it should say in the response from Mark Bibb, “. . . something they value on their Open Space property . . .” In the second paragraph, it should say, “she said it should also be made clear that what staff means by completion of the North TSA may not mean that implementation is complete.”

The Board had a discussion about the process for changing the minutes when suggestions come from the public. Kevin Bracy Knight said the Board should choose to either reduce what is written, or have a method by which the public can submit changes. Tracy Winfree said she will follow up with the city clerk on their process. Tom agreed that the Board should be consistent with other Boards. Shelley Dunbar added that the OSBT meetings will be televised and the video recording will be archived.

Kevin Bracy Knight moved the Open Space Board of Trustees to table approval of the minutes until the proper policy for the public amendment of the minutes is determined. Shelley Dunbar seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda

Guy Burgess, Boulder, said many of the new trails and trail proposals are astonishingly flat. Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) trails are used for exercise, and need a steeper grade to accomplish a workout. He said one area that he is concerned about is Anemone Hill. This is a good trail to hike in the winter as it is south facing, and if it is constructed to be too tame that will be very disappointing.

Randy Winter, Boulder County, said staff should look at access options to the Joder Ranch from Lefthand Trail. He said he also sent in some suggestions to OSMP trails staff about the gates on the Lefthand Trail, and an idea for moving these to better accommodate equestrians.

Raymond Bridge, on behalf of PLAN-Boulder County, said he urges the Board to do the North Trail Study Area (TSA). Staff is stretched pretty thin, and if they continue to get diverted, it will put off the North TSA even further.

Steve Lommelle, Boulder, said he would like to see the North TSA process be as inclusive as possible; he suggested using a trained facilitator. He asked staff to make it as easy as possible for people to engage;

figure out how to reach stakeholders, utilize web-based tools and gather ideas from other communities. He encouraged staff to map out all of the possibilities and to think big.

Suzanne Webel, Boulder County, said she appreciates staff looking at parking options on Joder. She offered to do a field trip with the Board and staff to this property. She would like to see the raw data that staff has completed. On behalf of the Boulder Area Trails Coalition (BATCO), she said they have volunteers as well as funding that can be used to help with trail construction. The Boulder County Horse Association (BCHA) has funds dedicated to the Joder Family that they will discuss putting towards this property. She said completing the North TSA in 2015 would be a huge success.

Karen Hollweg, Boulder, said approving the trail from Foothills Highway (Hwy) to Olde Stage Road before the North TSA is not a good idea. Time being taken and procedurally pursuing additional trail options prior to this process will take away from starting the TSA.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Director’s Updates

Voice & Sight Tag Program Update

Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner, gave an update to the Board on the Voice and Sight Tag Program.

Frances Hartogh asked if enforcement will increase near sensitive habitat. Steve said enforcement will not be targeted based on habitat, but rangers will try to be present in areas where there may be low compliance. Frances asked if they will patrol at night. Steve said he is unsure, but potentially if there is a need for enforcement. Shelley asked staff to send out another e-mail to those who have not yet registered. Frances asked how often classes will be offered moving forward. Steve said staff will try to match the demand for classes.

Status report on Left Hand Trail improvements

Jim Reeder, Land and Visitor Services Division Manager, gave an update on the Left Hand Trail improvements. He noted that several projects have been completed such as locking gates open when no cattle are in the area.

Status report on Skunk Canyon Trail alignment

Jim Reeder gave an update on Skunk Canyon and a possible trail alignment.

Tom asked about the timeline for this trail work, and if there would be any delays due to the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse habitat and getting clearance for the work. Heather Swanson said she has a large number of projects this year that require a Preble’s consultation. Tom asked if the Board made a decision tonight, would it make a difference in the timing. Heather said if this were decided upon now, it would be at the top of her list because other projects are not ready. Frances asked if it is worth using this section of trail; it is very short and needs go through the Preble’s review. Jim said whether the trail is designated or not, it is likely to still be used. Tom said this is the best solution he has seen. Molly Davis asked if the old trail will be filled back in. Jim said yes; in this habitat the trail is likely to be re-vegetated very quickly. The Board agreed that the proposed alignment is good, and staff should move forward.

Status report on Gregory Canyon step repair

Jim Reeder gave an update on Gregory Canyon, and the staff work moving forward. He said rock steps have been put in and a contractor is being contacted for the trailhead work.

FEMA Update

Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor, gave an update on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) coordination.

Frances asked if trails are considered infrastructure. Mark said yes. Frances asked how many trails are back to the condition staff would like them to be. Mark said he does not have a specific number, but he can report back. Tom asked what the biggest limiting factor is in how quickly this work can get done. Mark said access to properties can be difficult. Tom encouraged staff to continue to use contractors, such as Front Range Climbing Stewards if they are a good model. He said if staff needs additional resources which the Board can help obtain to please ask. Frances said it seems the trails more recently engineered weathered the flood better. Mark agreed; this was the intent when they were built. Kevin suggested staff should look at projects where volunteers could be used; this could save staff time/resources.

Opening of US36 underpass/South Boulder Creek Trail

Mark Gershman gave an update on the underpass at US36 and South Boulder Creek Trail.

Update on Joder property next steps

Jim Reeder gave the Board an update on Joder Ranch (this is what the Joder Family would like this property to be officially named). The Board supported this change.

Shelley asked if resources need to be taken away from other projects if work on Joder Ranch is to be completed. Tracy said potentially, staff is currently stretched pretty thin and there is a lot of overlap on projects. Kevin asked if staff is aware of the property for sale to the south of Joder Ranch, and if this will affect anything. Tracy said she is unsure, but can follow up. Kevin said it would be a good idea for staff to take advantage of offers from the equestrian community to visit the property with staff. He said there are a lot of trails on the property, and they do not seem overgrown and have good structure; whether they become official or not, the management of what is out there will be critical as staff moves forward. Frances said staff needs the time to do this right; if the Board continues to ask them to step off the timeline to evaluate different options, this will sway staff from the TSA process.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Matters from the Board

Tom Isaacson moved to elect Leah Case as the Board Secretary. Shelley Dunbar seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

Tom asked if work on the Sanitas Valley Trail could begin towards the bottom, so by early spring the connection to the East Ridge Trail could be open. Jim said he would have to check on this plan and report back. Heather Swanson noted that the prairie falcon nest dictates a lot of where this trail work needs to go. Tom expressed his thanks to staff for the good effort in notifying the public about this project.

Kevin said he has been researching public processes that have worked well. He asked the public to send information on successful processes they have been a part of to him, so he can incorporate those ideas into the North TSA.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Consideration of a motion to approve the purchase of 5 acres of land and all mineral rights located at 38474 Boulder Canyon Dr. from the Bonnie L. Schnell Revocable Trust for \$400,000 for Open Space and Mountain Parks purposes and an additional \$20,000 is recommended to be authorized from the acquisition budget for deconstruction and recycling of the existing house. Consideration of a motion to recommend that this parcel be included as part of the Western Mountain Parks Habitat Conservation Area.*

Jim Schmidt, Property Agent, gave a presentation to the Board on a possible acquisition.

Shelley asked if there is a benefit for certain areas to not be designated as an HCA, specifically parking areas and the trailhead. Jim said when this gets revisited this designation can be looked at again. Shelley suggested leaving the HCA designation until more is known. Jim said there is a possibility that this will

not come back to the Board. Heather said the high-quality habitat is not necessarily near the parking, but starts pretty quickly past that. The current parking lot is within the existing HCA, so the designation is not unprecedented.

Public Comment

Gary Lacy, Boulder, said he is interested in seeing the existing house used as a European-style trail amenity; providing a place for people to relax while they are out hiking. This would be a mutual benefit for the city and the public.

Shelley asked if the county has already approved this use. Gary said he has spoken with them briefly, but he did not get a clear reading; it is likely this would have to be re-zoned for commercial use. Kevin said he is interested in this idea; this creates a safe place for people to gather and to provide a natural rest experience. Tom said this is something that deserves some further discussion, and he would like to hear from the resource staff about potential implications of this disposal. Shelley said this sounds really interesting and a great idea for the community.

Ray Bridge, on behalf of PLAN-Boulder County, said they strongly support the acquisition of this property. This is one of the most important HCAs and he would strongly encourage keeping the designation. The Board should not wait to make that decision; this section has been a part of this ecosystem all along.

Karen Hollweg, on behalf of Friends of Boulder Open Space (FOBOS), said they support this acquisition and the HCA designation. The packet shows important habitat values, and rational for its inclusion into the larger HCA. She said they would encourage this acquisition and the HCA designation.

Return to the Board

Shelley asked if the owner would independently be able to divide this parcel on his/her own. Jim said no. Kevin suggested having a Conservation Easement put on the house, and then purchasing the area in its entirety. Tom said once OSMP owns the property, staff and the Board can choose to do with it as they see fit. Kevin suggested holding off on the HCA vote until next meeting so the public can be involved.

Motion

Shelley Dunbar moved the Open Space Board of Trustees approve a motion recommending that the Boulder City Council approve the purchase of this 5-acre parcel located at 38474 Boulder Canyon Dr. for \$400,000 and an additional \$20,000 be authorized from the acquisition budget for the potential deconstruction and recycling of the existing house. Molly Davis seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

Frances Hartogh moved the Open Space Board of Trustees approve a motion recommending that the Boulder City Council approve inclusion of this parcel as part of the Western Mountain Parks Habitat Conservation Area. Tom Isaacson seconded. This motion passed three to two. Kevin Bracy Knight and Shelley Dunbar dissented.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by Leah Case.